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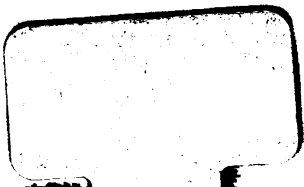
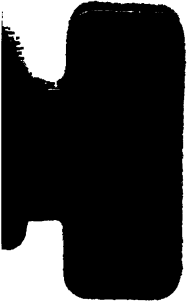
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1. Poetry, American



NB1
Smith



IDLE THOUGHTS IN IDLE HOURS.

MRS. M. T. SMITH.

SEDA LIA, MISSOURI.

1905



IDLE THOUGHTS IN IDLE HOURS.

BY
MRS. M. E. SMITH

SEDAIA, MISSOURI.

1905



.. F I L K D
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These fragments of thought, at the solicitation of my family, have been given to the press with the hope that some heart may find in them the solace and comfort that have come to me in idle hours.



*To Mrs. S. E. Cotton, my only sister, my companion in childhood,
my comrade in womanhood and my solace in the gathering
shades of evening, I dedicate these random thoughts.*

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TRANSFORMATION.

When Summer hath waned into Autumn's bright hue,
And frosts take the place of the earlier dew,
With a tenderness only that dear mothers know,
Death hideth her darlings away 'neath the snow.

The life that seemed waning in storm and in heat,
In exquisite casket lies safe and complete ;
Each tiny seed wrapped in its shell on the sod,
Fulfilling in silence its mission to God.

No life is destroyed, only changed in its kind,
And Summer will give it again to the wind ;
Bud, leaf and blossom all perfect again
Will adorn with gay beauty the pathway of men.

Twin sister of life, rejoicing I come,
With laurel and wreath for the good thou hast done ;
O process of Nature !—O wonderful thought—
Life gives us death, from death life is wrought.

Sedalia, Mo., 1878.

RHAPSODY.

Dear little baby, how strange it does seem
To see your face laughing so sweet in a dream.
Are the angels that brought you so close to our shores
That you still catch the light of their bright, dripping oars,
Cleaving the waters of heavenly hue,
That bear them away from me and from you?
Are their whispered good-byes, and the kisses they fling,
(Voiceless to me as a bird on the wing)
So full for my baby of promise and grace,
That heavenly glory is shed o'er his face?
Do they tell you alone of mirth and of song,
And of flower-strewn paths for your feet in the throng,
And bring you, my darling, to bless me awhile
With the grace and the charm of your magical smile?
Ah! Questions are vain. We only can know
That the years with their changes must come and must go;
That the lives that are past, and the lives that are brought
Are by our Father with mystery fraught;
That the joy you bring to a world growing old,
Is more precious than jewels in caskets of gold.
It is mine for to-day—yes, mine for all time,
Now and forever—through eternity mine.

Sedalia, Mo., December, 1885.

HELP FOR THE POOR.

Mothers, look out from your warm, sunny homes
Where comfort and love have made their abode,
And count, if you can, the dear little ones
Whom poverty drives away from your door.

From carpets so soft that your tread is unheard,
From firesides crackling and sparkling with mirth,
From cradles where naught but the love coo is heard,
From walls that shut in all the pleasures of earth.

Let your feet go in search of the waifs of the town,
Look into their hovels of want or of shame,
And show them the beauty of labor and toil,
And teach them to work for a home and a name.

Little untrained hands that are empty and cold,
Little hearts that have never been lifted in prayer,
Little feet that are wandering away from the fold,
Little moans that are lost on the dull wintry air.

Are waiting for balm you only can bring,
The light you can throw on their darkened way ;
The gladness of song you only can sing,
The glorious love that brightens your day.

Like toiling insects beneath the dark sea,
We are building a fabric our Father hath planned,
Where each one must work, tho' in shadow it be,
Till eternity's light reveals where we stand.

Teach them the gladness of work, and a song will be sung,
Hallelujahs the angels will hear ;
"The sweat of thy brow" is the magical word
That rings through the ages in tones loud and clear.

Sedalia, Mo., 1884.

MY FRIEND AND PHYSICIAN.

(Dr. A. H. Laidlaw.)



Ere noonday's sun had filled thy life
My life was touched by thine,
And treasured blessings rare and ripe
Have ever since been mine.

No cloud ere since has crossed my path,
However dark to see,
That held not some sweet aftermath,
Some light that came from thee.

In hours that brought thee pain
Thy heart was strong and brave;
~~And~~ e'en then, no sufferer came in vain,
Thine arm was out to save.

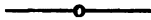
And now before thy set of sun,
May all the joy thou'st given
Into one peaceful river run
And fill thy days with heaven.

And flowers, rich flowers with love and song,
And all that hope can say
Throw light upon thy journey long,
'Till break of endless day.

Sedalia, Mo., December 22, 1898.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FOR DOCTOR AND MRS. ZACHOS.

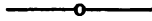
(Accompanied by a Pine Pillow.)



A very soft pillow, always for the Doctor's head,
While dreams and fragrance their richest perfume shed ;
And for Mrs. Zachos, be a bounteous table spread
With her for years to come, to grace its happy head,
With children bright and merry and friends for many a year,
To enjoy, as we have done, their hearty Christmas cheer.

New York City, Christmas, 1890.

B. B. T., ON HIS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY.



On life's rugged road 'tis sweet to stand
On the top of its loftiest peak,
And gazing afar toward the possible land,
Its ultimate boundary seek.
It is thine today, that wonderful sweep
In the distance, so mellowed and fair
That the touch of the Lord seems almost to reach
Thy face in its uplift of prayer.
Transfigured by faith the past all appears
A garlanded way opened wide;
A glorious vista of joy and of tears,
The dear, dear friends, the altar, the bride.
But the call of the Reaper oft came to the fold
And hushed many of those loved ones to sleep;
"Beside the still waters" they love as of old,
And vigil eternal they keep.
Oh, marvelous love! For the oncoming years
We pray thy righteousness still
To illumine his pathway and dispel all his fears,
While loving and working thy will.

New York, April 9, 1890.

PRAYER.

Father, my heart I bring to Thee,
That Thou its greatest need may'st see ;
Hard, unworthy, frail and weak,
Thy tender aid I humbly seek.
This world of light, and love and song,
Doth chant Thy praise in echoes long ;
Each tiny bird, and flower and tree,
Gives glad, sweet strains of minstrelsy.
All Nature tunes her soul to sing
Thy praise, and all her glory bring
To honor Thee, my God and King ;
But I, alas, with my torn wing,
Low in the dust must ever lie,
Unless Thou lift my soul on high
And give my tired feet the strength
To walk in Wisdom's ways at length.

Sedalia. Mo., 1878.

MY FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY.

Out of God's eternal treasure,
Moving swiftly through the spheres,
Come to us with unvoiced measure
Days and weeks and months and years.

They are jewels for our keeping,
Which by toil must polished be ;
And in darkest hours of weeping
Gather light we cannot see.

Tho' the task is long and heavy,
Bravely we must bear it all ;
Even gems without their setting
Ne'er can grace a kingly hall.

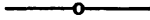
Time, with furnace-heat and mallet,
Deals for us the needed blows ;
And will lose no scattered fragment
From the anvil where it glows.

Then at last sweet rest will find us,
Decked in years and years of gems,
And the darkness left behind us
Will be aglow with diadems.

So to-day I tread the highlands
Of the glorious, golden time,
Where the pilgrim scarce can enter
Without prophecy sublime.

Sedalia, Jan. 10, 1880.

**TO MRS. JAMES HUMPHREY, WHO CHANGED A PAGE OF
PROSE FOR ME INTO RHYME.**



Your magic touch in metre glows
O'er all the page, and sings and soars
In music sweet with rapturous song
Until its echoes lingering long
Fill all my soul with roundelay
Like springtime birds at happy play.

My thoughts that were so dull before
Are brimming with poetic lore,
And dressed anew, the common place
Is sparkling with an added grace
And so transformed, my verse is due
For any charm it has to you.

Sedalia, Mo. December 28, 1903.

A LITTLE TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND.



Oh, come and bring flowers, earth's richest flowers,
And lay them all down at her feet ;
She loved you and blessed you in life's sunny hours,
And now she is resting in sleep.

'Tis no time to weep, 'tis no time to mourn,
When her victory of life is complete ;
But bring chaplets, rare chaplets of flowers,
The richest of flowers, and lay them all down at her feet.

Sedalia, Mo., December 1, 1900.

THRENODY.

Oh ye strange city of the dead,
Ye are not strange to me ;
Hearts with more of love
Than earth could hold
Are in thy strong embrace,
And I did share that love.
Feet whose swiftmess did
Outrun for me the fastest
Flight of time. Dear folded
Hands were quick to bind
My slightest wounds,
And lip and eye whose
Inwrought souls shaped
All my faults to sympathy
Divine. Ah, for me such
Noble service hath been
Wrought in such sweet way,
That love did give to love
A prophecy of Heaven.

Only yester morn through
Thy silent groves another form
Was borne, a dear tired
Form, whose dimpled
Hands did clasp my
Own at school, and walked
Beside me in the young
Romance of life.
Anon, our hands did
Touch in mid-day's shine
And storm, and we did
Weep and joy together as time
Went on. And now her
Sinless life is yielded up
To God in all her chastened
Beauty. Each pain and sorrow
Suffered here, and borne so patiently,
Beams now a gem of glory
In her coronet of love and joy.
And so it is not strange to me
This land of hallowed dead,
Their music sweet fills all the air,
On this my soul is fed.

INVALID REVERIES.

My morning was bright with a glorious sky,
And I joined the toilers hurrying by ;
But my hands were soon idle, my feet became still,
Impatient, I cried, "Is it really God's will?"

I'm weary with beating 'gainst cold prison bars
That shut out my life as clouds do the stars ;
I'm chafing to join the bold busy throng,
Who are giving their work as birds do their song.

Oh, bounteous heaven, is there nothing for me,
Save idling here on the sands of the sea,
Watching the workers who haste to the shore,
Their sheaves safely garnered, their labors all o'er?

The waters already are touching my feet,
No work have I done that for Heaven seemeth meet ;
What shall I say to the "Spirit who grieves"
To carry me over with "nothing but leaves?"

Oh, for strength in the vineyard to work for one day ;
But if that is denied me, still let me pray
That God will accept me as one of the throng
Who worships and loves Him with unceasing song.

St. Louis, October, 1879.

A DOLLAR FOR THE CHURCH.

A poem must come, a dollar be made,
Tho' rhymes and dimes are not my trade.
Still must I try ; my wings must fly.
Out of my brain must come a strain
Of jingle and tingle to mix and to mingle
The dryest of worth with heartiest mirth ;
That saints that are wrinkled.
And saints that are gray,
That saints that are youngest,
And saints that are gay,
May laugh and beguile one sweet hour away.

But oh, that dollar ; how can I get it ?
I cannot beg, how can I fix it ?
A bright idea The Christian will
Bring it Subscribe, subscribe,
Dear friend, without a bribe.
At once, at once, subscribe, sub ;
A shoulder cold ;
"No Christian needed in our fold."

Sedalia, 1895.

TO AGNES DALBY

On receiving a beautiful picture of herself.



Pausing here in grace and beauty
Heart and soul all undefiled,
I would throw lifes fairest flowers
For thy feet my darling child.

And in all thy happy morning
Stamped by heaven with richest ray
Youth and joy thy face adorning,
Hopes sweetest song should be my lay.

And on and on through womanhood
More grace, more beauty and more song
With love divine, (not understood)
Should keep thy steps thy way along.

September, 1900.

BABY HANDS—OLDER HANDS.

In childhood's hours—for joy or woe
A day is a ponderous thing.
The morrows are all too stately and slow,
Delaying the pleasures they promise to bring.
But on they go—both sure and fleet,
These days of slow advance.
And baby hands and baby feet
Go gaily on in the dance.
But a little while and the past will hold
A measure so full of days
That baby memories have all grown old
And looking back they count decades.
Ah well, if baby hands and baby feet
Have kept their record true,
Then older hands and older feet
Will have no cause to rue;
But all will be joy and all be sweet
To lay at the Master's holy feet.

New York, October, 1889.

TO "GRANDMA" KULLMER, ON HER 89TH BIRTHDAY.

Sweet spirit that so long hath graced
The royal feast of life,
And given thy service in the ranks
Of holy Christian strife.

We come with loving words to greet
Thy presence while we may ;
To weave a garland for thy brow
On this glad Christmas day.

In all the years that backward lie,
Thou hast led the way,
And all that dreadful seemed to youth,
Made beautiful as day.

The awful path where trials lie
In wait for tender feet,
Dismayed us, till we saw beyond,
Thy face so pure and sweet.

The lowering clouds, the storm and stress,
From which we shrank with fear,
Changed in thy blessed company
To Heavenly calm and cheer.

Like leaves that in the warm embrace
Of sun and dew unfold,
The glow of Jesus' love thy face
And form benignly hold.

Filled at His fount of love, thy heart
Reflects His love again,
Then giveth out, in word and deed,
Unto thy fellow men.

And so we come with joy to greet
Thy presence while we may,
To weave a garland for thy brow
On this, thy natal day.

Sedalia, Mo., December 25, 1898.

SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY REFLECTIONS.

A Spinner who wrought with the speed of the wind,
On an errand of mercy was sent to mankind;
From the throne of the Master this mandate was given :
Draw out a thread so strong, so sublime,
That nothing can rend it; nor malice, nor hate.
Draw it out! Draw it out, the task is divine.
From morn until night no rest must thou take;
From night until morn the same diligence make—
Through sunshine and tempest, in storm and in calm,
Relax not thy vigil, withhold not thine arm.
Wouldst know thou this thread from the realm of day?
'Tis the Christ love in mortals, those beings of clay,
Who frail as a bubble have come in their pride,
With this golden thread their only true guide
Through the storms and quicksands of this lowly earth
It will lead back to heaven, the place of their birth.
They must guard it and keep it from stain and from rust;
'Tis the anchor of safety that will hold to the last.

ON BIRTHDAY OF MY FRIEND, MRS. JAEI GENTRY, 1903.

Oh blessed baby, with eyes of blue
Laughing and sobbing the whole day through !
Day by day each year hath wrought
An added grace, a wealth of thought,
A halo on thy brow hath thrown
Of duty well and bravely borne.

That baby, now with crown of white,
Her life aglow with heavenly light,
Is laughing still—with eyes of blue
And working still—the whole day through
And blessing still—in many ways,
Oh, grant her more—more years of days.

TO MILDRED BARD.

(On receiving her picture.)

Roses lie all about thy path, my child,
And sunshine gilds thy day,
But He who grants this joyous life
May sometime cloud thy way.

Then take and trust a Father's love,
He doeth all things well.
Be yours the Hope—the Faith to move—
The shadows to dispel.

Life is sweet, my little friend,
To those whose hearts are true,
And Love's the passport in the end
That makes our Heaven secure.

PARODY.

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
The punkin pie is almost done, our jubilee is near ;
Heaped in barrels down below, the fragrant apples lie
A waitin' for the sewin' bee an' girl with laffin' eye.

The win's a howlin' 'round the house, the rain is fallin' fast,
The leaves are flyin' up an' down, the sunshine all is past ;
The hay is in the barn, an' the corn is in the shock,
An' the boys 'll go a huskin', whether schule keeps in or not.

An' gramma keeps a knittin'—a knittin' for us all—
An' I hold the hanks while Mimy winds the ball ;
Our Mimy is a daisy, with cheeks like apples red,
An' she blushes, an' she blushes at everything that's said.

The wren is gone, an' all the birds, and the rabbit thro' the leaves
Keeps up a noise, a constant noise like rain from drippin' eaves ;
The win's a blowin' all the day, an' from the trees the crow
Seems a grievin' for the flowers that perished long ago.

But Mimy's lips are like the rose, her eyes the sweetest blue,
An' then her hair aint very red, but just a golden hue ;
An' the sunflower 's nothin' to the yaller dress she wears
When we are out a walkin', an' a gazing at the stares.

An' when a good day comes, as still such days will come
To call the squirrel an' the bee from out their winter home,
An' I hear the nuts a droppin', e'en tho' the trees are still
An' all the day is smoky o'er the waters of the rill.

Ah, then I wouldn't care how many summers died
If Mimy could be only forever at my side ;
No gloom would ever darken that happy home of ours,
For 'twould blossom as the rose with Eden's fairest flowers.

Sedalia, Mo., November 10, 1890.

INVOCATION.

In my chamber's sacred silence,
Whilst the winds are raging high,
Unto thee, in human parlance,
Comes my soul's impassioned cry.

Closer, closer, Father, draw me
From the world's alluring charms,
Let me hasten to the shelter
Of Thine everlasting arms.

Keep me from the dark temptations,
Which our human hearts ensnare ;
Fill my thoughts with contemplation,
Of Thine all pervading care.

Give me wings of faith to enter
Through the gates of Paradise ;
There to drink the flowing nectar,
Love and truth and sacrifice.

Give me back my dreams of childhood,
Dreams of duty bravely done,
Dreams that move the mountain forward,
Dreams that courage might have won,

Give them now to prompt my purpose,
Still to struggle for the goal ;
Give them, ere life's evening sunset,
Leaves me stranded and undone.

Sedalia, Mo., 1894.

S. E. COTTON.

MY VALENTINE.

In every clime beneath the sun,
Where'er the rapid years do run,
Until both sun and stars decline,
I'll hold you as my Valentine.

And when the sands of life run low,
And fortunes come and fortunes go;
In tottering age, in life's decline,
You still shall be my Valentine.

And when both days and years are past,
And we have reached the eternal vast,
E'en then and there you shall be mine,
My ever living Valentine.

February, 1895.

MRS. E. B. G., ON HER FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY.

A decade of gladness and childish mirth
Came to me, Mrs. G., before the date of your birth,
But in this race so unfairly begun
An unprejudiced judge would say you had won.

My steps have been slow, cautiously guarding my feet,
Whilst yours grown to pinions, than the eagle's more fleet,
Have winged your way loftily over the world,
And on hilltop and valley a flag you've unfurled.

Glad messenger of joy, sweet herald of Peace,
For the union of churches, of war a surcease,
On, on you have sped, not missing your steps,
Whilst I am still pegging away in the depths.

O'er prairie and mountain, in cabin and hall,
The Church Union glides like the snow in its fall,
A harbinger glad of the oncoming day
When clamor and creed are all swept away.

New York City, 1890.

DEATH.

With reverent awe, oh dreaded Death,
I beg to lift thy somber veil
The while I seek with bated breath
To find God's love in thee prevail.

Oh, let me come and lift the pall,
Perchance, e'en glory I may see ;
For He who made and loveth all,
Hath crowned our earthly life with thee.

Then let me linger near thy side
As friend and friend together go,
And waiting in thy portal wide,
Abide my time 'till all I know.

It cannot be that thou dost hide
In awful covert lone and bare
Except to crush some awful pride
And give for love a wild despair.

Thy wing is brooding in the air,
In every sound thy tale is told ;
Thy Maker's law doth everywhere
Demand a new life for the old.

By thee my pulses first were stirred,
By thee my wants are all supplied ;
New songs in life had ne'er been heard,
If older music had not died.

Without thee I had never known
The pleasures of this life on earth ;
And can I doubt that from thy throne
We gain the great immortal birth ?

Then creep no more, O soul of mine,
Through paths by Death itself made bright,
But plume thy wings for fairer clime,
And soar with her to higher light.

And let our vanished ones have wings
To speed them on to worlds sublime,
For universal Nature sings,
The hand that made us is divine.

Sedalia, Mo., August, 1878.

GARFIELD'S STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

(Trip to Long Branch. When he was dying.)

Bow to your God, ye men called divine ;
Kneel on the sod, ye men from the mine ;
Swift run your train, O good engineer ;
Brave, though he dies, there's nothing to fear.

Hark : "Let her go," the dying man said ;
Speed, then, your train, and onward they sped ;
Too late, alas ! the breeze from the wave
Kissed his pale brow, but too late to save.

Room for the hearse, a great soul is gone ;
Break, oh, ye hearts, the dark deed is done ;
Toll all ye bells, a world bows in grief ;
Roar all ye guns, dead, dead, lies your chief.

Mourn all ye fair, your hero lies low ;
Songs fill the air, but all tell of woe ;
Droop for your son, ye flag of the free ;
Wail all ye lands, from sea unto sea.

Jersey City, October 1, 1881.

GEORGE R. SMITH.

(My Father.)

Stalwart and brave, like the oak on the mountain,
A monarch he stood in storms rushing by ;
Humanity's friend—an o'erflowing fountain—
He gave of his bounty to all who were nigh.

Rock in a land that was pining for shadow,
Where weary ones halting, found rest in its shade ;
Unmindful of race or of color or station,
No call came in vain that humanity made.

A patriot true, his heart knew no section—
His country his glory,—her pride was his own ;
Her children alike should share the protection
Guaranteed by the flag that gave them a home.

Sustainer of Truth, of Right the defender ;
No matter how strong their opposers were found
No parley he made, nor thought of surrender—
No compromise—for the bauble of place or renown.

For innocent childhood his heart was o'erflowing
With sweetness and love as pure as their own ;
And tenderly guarding the pure rights of woman,
The place he assigned her in the world was a throne.

But the feet that so long had been treading the highlands
At last in the valley of shadow were stayed,
And angels seemed wreathing invisible garlands
Of the bright deeds and virtues his life had portrayed.

With love and with prayer we tried to constrain him,
But hearkening to voices from over the sea,
Our cries were unheeded, we could not detain him ;
The strong man grew silent, the spirit was free.

Not idly nor sadly did he enter the valley ;
With harness all on for the duties of earth,
God lovingly led him into the shadow,
And gave him the glory of immortal birth.

His life work is over. Lay him down without weeping.
The dear hands are empty. Fold them now on his breast.
The heights were all mounted. The spirit's pure keeping
Never waned for one moment. Lay him down to his rest.

Sedalia, Mo., August, 1879.

THE CHILD'S SONG.

Kitty, kitty, go to sleep,
Shut your eyes, now don't you peep ;
Sing with me your little song,
But do not make it very long.

Hurry, kitty, for you see,
Mamma soon will come for me ;
And I must see you safe in bed,
All covered up except your head.

And while I rock you in my chair,
You must purr your little prayer ;
Although you say it soft and low,
Christ will hear it all, you know.

Mamma makes me bend my knee,
But kitty, dear, you can't, you see ;
For you're too little yet to try,
See : I'm so tall, and big, and high.

And then you can't say any words,
No more than chicks or little birds ;
But when you do your best to tell,
He will hear you just as well.

Sedalia, Mo., February 18, 1879.

CONSOLATION.

(Dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Gunnell, of Colorado Springs, on the death of their daughter, "Kate.")

"There is no death," save death for life,
Our life is here the wealth of death;
No life on earth our God doth give
That is not nurtured by its breath.

Your darling only closed her eyes
To open them on deathless life;
The eternal hills of Paradise
Are hers, with everlasting life.

No death nor anguish will she know
In that fair realm where life is love,
No shadow cloud her radiant brow
Where Peace eternal reigns above.

Let not your home be hushed and stilled
Where erst her voice made melody,
The keys her fairy fingers trilled
Will yield again their symphony.

Then, stricken ones, be strong and brave,
Your storm-swept hearts our Lord will still;
The world is full of souls to save,
Your child is safe. Abide his will.

New York, March 10, 1890.

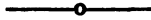
THOUGHTS ON THE CLOSE OF A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG LIFE

"Time is short, and work must be done,"
And her delicate fingers wove night and day ;
So swiftly they wrought their fabric of love
That the blush of the morn was still on her cheek,
Its dews not yet brushed away by her feet,
When the web and the woof of her life were all told,
And fell into our arms, rich fold upon fold.
Finished, finished ! Oh, God, it is soon
To close such a life, for so sweet a boon
To go out from our perishing earth—
So weak, so needing the help she could give,
Could heaven not spare her yet a short time to live ?
Still, Father, we bless thee, thou lovest the fair,
And our angel is safe, tho' gone from our care ;
But, Father, *we* grope, it is dark, give us light,
Let us not sink, but have strength to bear,
To *do*, and to dare, to *work* in the world's busy throng.
Our darling so brightened our pathway here
That we knew little of sadness, thought little of fear.
Take thou now our hand, dear Lord,
And lead us, tho' blindly, by thy living word,
And let us not creep as the slaves of a King,
But knowing thy love, tho' we weep, let us sing.

Sedalia, Mo., June, 1887.

TO MY VALENTINE.

(Dedicated to Miss Alice Chappelle of the Richardson Chautauqua Circle, 1892.)



Oh maiden fair and maiden wise,
Open wide those radiant eyes,
While to thee I here confess
All my inner consciousness.

I have loved thee and thee only ;
Loved thee, loved thee, oh so fondly ;
All these years with fond devotion,
Loved thee with the strength of ocean.

Loved thee as the hart, the mountain,
Loved thee as the lark the matin,
Loved thee with my hope of Heaven ;
May such passion be forgiven,

Loved thee in the twilight gloaming,
Loved thee in the early morning,
Loved thee as my only treasure,
Loved thee with the heart's full measure.

Loved thee in despair and sorrow,
Loved to-day and loved to-morrow,
Loved thee with pure faith and trust,
Loved thee still through all I must.

Oh maiden fair and maiden wise,
Turn away those wondrous eyes,
Or speak unto my fainting heart,
Words of comfort ere we part.

S. E. COTTON.

THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

It was but yesterday, my darling,
You were playing with the flowers,
And your glad and happy voice
Made vocal all the hours.
The light and joy of life
Were radiant in your face,
As day by day we watched you grow
In loveliness and grace.

But now, oh dearest one, your casket filled with flowers
We leave beneath the stars,
Your spirit free from ache or pain
Has burst the hindering bars.
Heaven's light is now more joyous
That the God we all adore
Has in His precious keeping
Our child, forevermore.

Sedalia, Mo., 1892.

TO MY SISTER.

(From an old album of my girlhood.)

As gazing on thy unsullied heart
I'd pause before I rashly traced
A prayer, a hope, a wish or thought
Where it could never be erased.
So now I falter ere I stain
This leaf of purest white,
So thrillingly intense the strain
My heart would here indite.

Yes, sister mine, thy sunny smile
From memory's twilight dawn
Has beamed upon the shadowy aisle
Through which my path hath worn,
To brighten every joy I knew,
To gild each passing cloud,
With heart forever warm and true
And spirit justly proud.

Yet, when I'd strike this harp unskilled
To speak the ever murmuring love
Which for aye! its cords have thrilled,
Those cords refuse to move;
And trembling with the weight intense
Of feeling's fervid glow
Sends up its prayer for God to bless,
What can the heart do more?

Georgetown, Nov. 29, '53.

S. E. COTTON.

PASSING OF THE CENTURY.

Oh, Time, withhold thy hand. Take not yet away from us
This century grand. This century on whose fair tablets men
Have writ such noble deeds. We know the good old
Eighteen hundred, and now, ere thou hast closed the door,
Ere the lock is turned forever on this hallowed name,
And we are thrust in stranger halls, may we not wander back
And clasp once more the hands we loved and grasped,
And hear once more from lips that loved, our name
In love? What has this Nineteen Hundred with its long
Stretch of years to exchange for our happy past?
We pray thee wait a little while before the change,
And make more sure of all the wonders men have wrought,
And now hold out to thee, Old Time.

* * * * *

The clouds that draped the world in darkness all
Day long, sped rapidly away, and while I mused,
The stars joined hands and danced in gladness.
The good old year with sweeter face than I had ere beheld,
And eyes that beamed o'er all the world in love,
Laid all her burdens down, gathered up her
Jewels of Truth and Righteousness and
Shedding happiness from her golden wings,
Waved a glad good night, and vanished
Into that hallowed past that already
Holds for us so much of the beautiful.
The fair New Year had come while I lingered
With the old. And life went bounding on to the
Music of the stars, as from creation's dawn.
And the lesson, that only Love and Faith and Hope
And character are immortal, and that only the
Pure in heart shall see God, was borne into my soul
With the gladness of the night, and I was happy
And welcomed Nineteen Hundred
As the other sped away.

Sedalia, Mo., January 1, 1900.

MY SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.



Oh I can never forget, it clings to me yet,
The bound and the spring of life's merry swing,
With my sister at play at the breaking of day,
When the world's newly born woke the stir of the morn.

And the whispering stars with Orion and Mars,
Were fanned in the sky by the wind that passed by,
Making melody sweet, that danced in our feet,
And bowed the great trees in the whispering breeze.

Or when our little tasks ended, our mother suspended
A few moments more her watch at the door,
In race or in dance away we would prance,
Beguiling the time in laughter and smile.

Oh, the lark's note on high, and the wind sailing by,
We hear it to-day as together we pray,
"Nearer, Nearer My God to Thee," hand in hand, oh let us see
More and more Thy love divine, more and more, oh make us
Thine.

So it comes to me yet without much of regret,
And my seventy years have banished the tears,
The vista between filled with beauty serene
Is vocal with song all the day long.

A FRIEND'S SILVER WEDDING.

In all the world there's not a girl
So dear to me as darling Jennie;
She'd say me nay in such sweet way
It didn't scare me worth a penny.

Her step was high and her tender eye
Beat all the eyes of lovers faery;
When turned on me, bade darkness flee,
I longed to call her "mine, my dearie."

A time there came when hope was gone,
For 'neath the stars one silent evening
I left her with a heart forlorn,
And gave my heart to bitter grieving.

Another time she gave a smile,
That smile her maiden love confessing;
And in all these years, 'tis true, my dears,
Of girls you cannot beat me guessing.

And thus tonight, with love bedight,
I here unfurl the silver lining;
For every cloud has turned to light,
Transformed by Cupid's soft beguiling.

In fragrant fells and bosky dells,
Where'er a loyal lover dwells,
No word so sweet as one that tells
Of wedding bells, sweet silver bells.

Oh, bells sublime, oh, bells divine,
Oh, happy, heavenly wedding bells,
The silver bells, the golden bells,
The everlasting wedding bells.

Ring out, ring out your glad refrain,
Ring 'round the earth your happy chimes;
Ring out, and out, and out again,
And ring to Heaven the glad Amen.

Sedalia, Mo., 1897.

